

Executive Summary: 2025 Court Reporting Industry Trends

A nationwide shortage of stenographers is being driven by an aging workforce and declining enrollment in stenography programs. This decade-long problem is coming to a head in courtrooms across the country. What judicial leaders in some states have termed a “constitutional crisis” is now threatening litigants’ fundamental right to due process and the integrity of the judicial system.

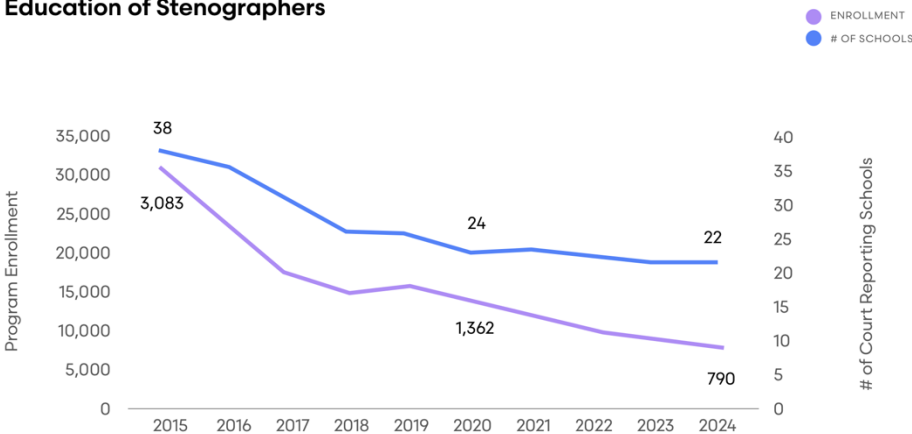
In early 2024, the American Association of Electronic Reporters and Transcribers commissioned independent consulting firm Brand Consultancy to complete a comprehensive study on the state of the court reporting industry, including the current and projected supply of stenographers and usage and perception of digital reporting. Over nine months, the research team conducted extensive interviews, an online survey and secondary research to produce the study. This executive summary of the team’s full findings explores the critical workforce shortage and demonstrates how digital reporting is a proven, reliable and scalable solution to meet the growing demand for accurate and timely transcripts.

The Stenographer Shortage: A Constitutional Crisis

Over the last decade, the number of certified stenographers has **declined 21 percent** due to retirements and fewer recruits entering the profession.

The current workforce stands at approximately **23,000 stenographers**. That figure is expected to continue to shrink, exacerbating scheduling delays and increased costs for courtroom hearings, depositions, and other legal proceedings across the country.

Education of Stenographers



Over the same period, student enrollments at stenography schools have **dropped by 74 percent**.

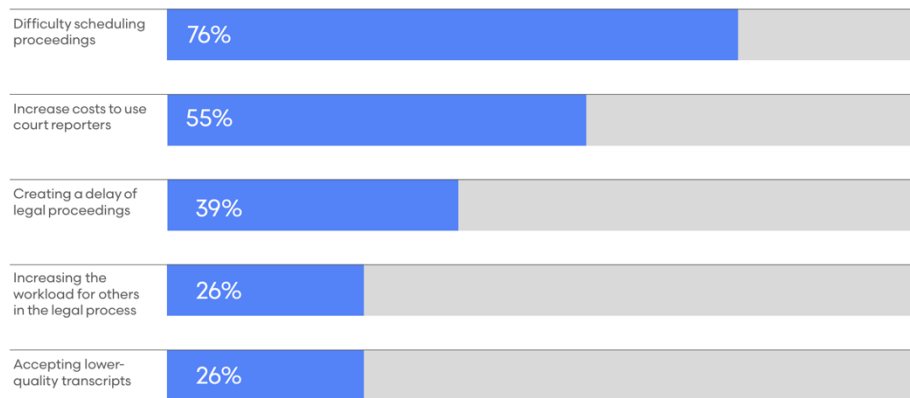
Meanwhile, about **42 percent** of stenography certification programs or professional stenography schools have closed over the last decade across the United States.

Source: 2025 Court Reporting Industry Trends, AAERT

Digital Reporting: A Proven Solution

End users surveyed in the 2025 Court Reporting Industry Trends study indicate that **63% of stakeholders acknowledge the stenographer shortage** is creating logistical challenges. An overwhelming majority – **76% of end users** – report scheduling difficulties due to the stenographer shortage, and **55% cite increased costs**, making court reporting services less accessible. These factors directly affect equitable access to justice – especially in high-stakes cases like domestic violence restraining orders and child custody hearings. Litigants deprived of a verbatim record of their proceedings are at a distinct disadvantage in their pursuit of legal remedies.

“What is the impact of not having enough stenographers?”



Source: 2025 Court Reporting Industry Trends, AAERT

As the judicial system grapples with these challenges, digital reporting has already begun to alleviate some of these pressures and continues to emerge as a trusted method of capture. Digital reporters are capable of meeting industry demands while maintaining **high accuracy standards** — viewed by respondents as the **most significant key performance indicator (KPI) by 96 percent**.

Digital reporting is not just an alternative option—it is a **proven, effective methodology** that directly addresses the stenographer shortage while maintaining the highest standards of accuracy and reliability. Like their stenographic counterparts, digital reporters are highly trained, certified professionals who use purpose-built hardware and software designed to capture high-quality audio, real-time text translation, and detailed annotations. These professionals undergo rigorous training and certification processes to ensure proficiency in handling proceedings with precision.

Digital reporters also offer improved operational efficiencies. By integrating advanced technology with professional oversight, digital reporting provides an accurate, efficient, and scalable solution to the growing crisis, ensuring that courts can continue delivering timely and reliable access to justice.

CONCLUSION:

In light of the current labor crisis in the court reporting industry, expanding opportunities for digital reporting represents a strategic path toward ensuring the sustainability and integrity of the justice system. By leveraging technology and embracing innovative solutions, the legal community can enhance efficiencies, reduce costs and maintain high standards of accuracy in court reporting.

The collaboration between stakeholders is essential for developing a resilient reporting environment. The legal industry must considerably embrace digital reporting to bridge the workforce gap and ensure access to justice for all litigants. While stenographers remain a valuable part of the profession, their dwindling numbers necessitate new approaches. Highly trained, certified digital court reporters provide the accuracy, speed and efficiency needed to supplement the demand.

To ensure the continued vitality of court reporting, regulatory changes are needed to remove barriers to digital reporting, increase training opportunities, support licensing expansion and integrate technology-driven solutions. By adopting a balanced approach that includes both stenography and digital methods — centered on a highly trained, certified professional at the center of the proceeding — the industry can maintain its high standards while modernizing to meet the challenges today and in the future.

Report Methodology

The full **2025 Court Reporting Industry Trends Report**, commissioned by the American Association of Electronic Reporters and Transcribers (AAERT) and conducted by an independent third party, The Brand Consultancy, employed a mixed-methods research approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the court reporting industry. The study utilized three primary research components:

In-Depth Stakeholder Interviews: The research began with 27 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, including attorneys, paralegals, court reporters (Stenographic and Digital), judges, court clerks and other industry thought leaders. These interviews provided insights into the challenges and perceptions of stenographic and digital reporting and informed the quantitative survey.

National Online Survey: To quantify industry trends, researchers deployed an online survey to 550+ court-reporting end users and providers, collecting responses from a diverse and nationally representative sample. The survey was fielded in Q4 2024 using an anonymous, randomized sample. Data was weighted for accuracy, ensuring responses were statistically reliable.

Survey Participant Breakdown:

- Attorneys & Legal Professionals (45%)
- Court Reporters (Stenographic & Digital) (30%)
- Paralegals & Legal Assistants (15%)
- Court Administrators & Clerks (10%)

Secondary Data Analysis: To provide additional validation, the study incorporated external sources:

- **National Court Reporting Association (NCRA) Reports** – Tracking industry workforce trends.
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)** – Examining employment and wage data.
- **State Court Reporting Boards** – Assessing stenographer certification numbers.
- **Legal Trends Reports** – Evaluating changes in case volume and demand for transcription.

By integrating qualitative interviews, a large-scale survey, and secondary data analysis, the report presents a holistic, evidence-based view of the court reporting industry. These summary findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, legal professionals, and court reporting organizations looking to adapt to workforce shortages and ensure continued access to justice through accurate, timely transcripts.